Numb. 11.

MERCATOR:

OR,

Commerce Retrieved;

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *Britiſh* Trade, &c.

From Tueſday, June 16. to Thurſday, June 18. 1713.

The Paper entituled, A Scheme of the Trade as it is at preſent carried on between *England* and *France,* for the Year 1668-9. *now handed about.*
The Frauds in that Paper, and the Deſigns of publiſhing it now, expoſed.
The Methods thoſe People, who eſpouſe it, take to defend it, help to expoſe it.

IT is very ſtrange to find the Oppoſers of any Argument lay the whole Streſs and Weight of what they have to ſay upon any thing, which they are not very ſure, they can ſupport the Truth of. But it is perfectly ſurprizing, to ſee Men value themſelves and their Cauſe, upon Accounts and Calculations, which are fraudulent and erroneous, known by themſelves to be ſo, and which they might be ſure, in an Age like this, when Men take nothing upon Truſt, would by inquiring Heads be ſoon Detected and Expoſed.

Nothing of this kind can be more wonderful, than what we ſee practiſed juſt now by ſome People, in handing about a Paper call'd A SCHEME of the Trade between England and France; in order to make the Trade between England and France look with an Aſpect to pleaſe them, and to anſwer all the Romantick things they have ſaid of it; which Paper, or SCHEME, was printed in 1674. and ſaid to be Sign'd by ſeveral eminent Merchants of the City of London.

The Noiſe this makes, and their valuing themſelves ſo much upon it, neceſſarily calls back this Paper, for the preſent, from purſuing the Article of the Trade to Portugal, which was juſt entred upon, to conſider and expoſe this ſo much eſpouſed Fallacy; and if when the Particulars are truly ſtated, it does not appear to be ſuch a Paper, ſo falſe in Fact, and fraudulent in Contriving, as that every honeſt Man ought to be aſhamed of it, this Paper ſhall be very much miſtaken.

Something might be ſaid to the Deſign of that Paper, when it was firſt publiſhed, and to the Perſons, who Sign'd it, (viz.) That it was Calculated for a Deſign then on foot, to expoſe the Publick Management, and divide the People againſt the Court. But this Paper, avoiding as much as poſſible all ſuch Retroſpects, ſhall only take notice of what Uſe is to be now made of it.

The Deſign of making it Publick now, is plainly ſeen, (viz.) To poſſeſs our People with an Opinion, that the French Trade was carryed on very much to the Diſadvantage of England. But having, it ſeems, no exact Accounts from the Cuſtom-Houſe Books, which would ſupport them in that Deſign; or any Particulars from other Hands, which would make good their Suggeſtions, they were at a loſs, till, to their great Joy, they found out this Paper, which, becauſe they would have it be ſo, they thought was compleatly qualifyed for their Purpoſe, Sign'd, as they ſay, by Fourteen conſiderable Merchants, and Vouched by them, tho' very unwarily, to be exactly Calculated. They immediately lay hold of it, publiſh it, and quote it as an unqueſtion'd Authority, to make good all, that they think fit to ſay againſt the Trade with France; and this, as may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, without ever examining, wherein it was Deficient, or how far ſo many Merchants had ſet their Hands to the moſt unfair and partial Calculation of this kind, that ever came out in the World under ſuch a Sanction.

To detect this the more effectually, the firſt thing that occurs is, to note, what the Commiſſioners of the Cuſtoms have certified under their Hands to the Houſe of Commons, in return to an Order of the Houſe of the Tenth inſtant, directing the ſaid Commiſſioners to lay before the Houſe, the Scheme of Trade between England and France as entred in the Cuſtom-Houſe Books in the Year 1674, which is the ſame Paper now in queſtion; in which Report is the following Paragraph.

" The Commiſſioners think it their Duty humbly to " obſerve, that the Accompt mentioned in the ſaid " Scheme, being from Michaelmas 1668. to Michaelmas " 1699. differs very much from the Accompt of that " Year, which was by Order laid before this Honourable Houſe the 4th inſtant, as far as the ſaid Account could be compared with the Scheme; and " therefore they humbly conclude, that the ſaid Scheme " could not be taken from the Cuſtom-Houſe Books; " and they are confirmed in this Opinion, becauſe having cauſed a careful Examination to be made of the " Minutes of the Board, they do not find any notice " taken of that Scheme, nor does it appear by the " Entry in the Book, that the ſame was prepared by " Order of the Commiſſioners.

Cuſtom-Houſe, London, 13 June, 1713. *Sign'd by the Commiſſioners.*

Here

Here (1) the Birth of the Paper is proved to be ſpurious and illegitimate, and (2) the Subſtance is declared to differ very much from the true Account of that Year in the Cuſtom-Houſe Books.

It may be proper then, for the farther detecting the Fraud of this Scheme, to enter into an Examination of ſome of the Particulars, wherein it differs from the true Account of that Year; which ſhall be done by giving a brief Abſtract of the ſaid Scheme, and likewiſe of the true Account from the Cuſtom-Houſe, as it is now laid before the Houſe of Commons by the Commiſſioners.

By both which it will appear, that the Deſign of this Paper, call'd A SCHEME, was then, and the making it publick is now, to leſſen, in the publick Opinion, the Value of our Exportations to France, and to encreaſe or heighten the Value of our Importations from France; a Deſign in it ſelf Diſhoneſt, but much more ſo from the manner of doing it, as will appear by what follows.

Our Exportations to France from Michaelmas to Michaelmas 1668--9, are made by the Scheme to amount to l. 171021 06 08, and all the Species of Goods are reſtrain'd to theſe few, (viz.) Woollen Cloths, Dozens, Kerſeys, Raſhes, Pennyſtones, Cottons, Flannel, Hoſe, Bays, Stuffs, Serges, and Perpets, with ſome Petties, which are crowded together at the Value of 20000 l.

Two Obſervations ſhall contain, what is ſufficient to ſay to this part of it, and nothing can be deſired to expoſe it more.

1. That here is not half of the Species of Goods named, which are every Year Exported to France, and which, as appears by the Cuſtom-Houſe Books, were actually Exported to France that Year.

2. That of the Species of Goods, which they have named, they have not ſet down the true Quantities, which were really Exported to France that very Year.

Theſe are ſuch Tokens for a deſign'd Colluſion and Prevarication, that nothing of that kind can be more corrupt.

But to deſcend to a few Particulars of this Fraud, that the People may ſee, in how groſs a manner they are Impoſed upon.

1. Take a few of the Articles mentioned by the SCHEME of Goods Exported to France, 1668-9. as aforeſaid, and when compared with the real Entries of that Year in the Cuſtom-Houſe Books, from the Port of London, according to the Account given in by the Commiſſioners, and now lying before the Houſe of Commons.

The Difference ſtands thus.

	Exported as by the Scheme.	Really Exported as by the Cuſtom-Houſe Books.	
Spaniſh Cloths	829		2249
Long Cloths	112		349
Short Cloths	42		54
Northern Dozens. Double	97		335
Ditto Single	69		162
Devon Dozens and Cloth Raſhes	186		339
Penniſtones	6		161
Kerſies	3585	18808.	5907
Norwich Stuffs	344	10834.	1701
Serges and Perpets	5564	7974	7581
	10834		18808

Any one, upon Caſting up theſe Particulars, will ſee to what a Magnitude this Part will amount.

2. Add to this, That to leſſen the Appearance of our Trade to France, they have wholly omitted all the Fiſh, ſuch as Herrings, Pilchards, Salmon, and White Fiſh; all our Plantation-Goods, and all the Goods of other Countries Re-exported by us to France; of which the Quantities Exported that very Year were very great, and are ſo every Year: The Particulars are too long to ſet down here, but may be gueſs'd at by theſe few.

Cotton, Wool, and Yarn	67695 l.
Goats Hair or Wool	50977
Indico	8481
Sugar brown	608000
Pepper	224859
Tobacco	160818
Callicoes	7995 Pieces.
Oyl	203 Ton
Drugs	68309 l.

Beſides prodigious Quantities of other Goods Exported to France that Year; as may be ſeen by the ſaid Account from the Cuſtom-Houſe, now lying before the Houſe of Commons.

The remaining Particulars are ſo many, as makes it plain, that the value of our Exportations to France for that Year exceeded the value of our Importations from France very conſiderably, as by the Cuſtom-Houſe Books will appear.

The Errors in the Account of the Importations, are no leſs unfairly ſtated than theſe; and the Fraud is extended to a much greater value: Nay, even the manner of ſtating it, diſcovers a deſign of Impoſing upon the publick. For Firſt, The Export is confined to the Port of London, only with an Allowance of one Third more for the out-Ports; whereas the Import is ſaid to be for the whole Kingdom, let them take it which way they pleaſe.

If their Imports are for the Port of London only, then they have committed a Fraud in the Quantities, to the value of above 721,796 Pounds, as will be prov'd by the Cuſtom Houſe Books, and ſhall be ſhewn in the next Paper.

If their Imports take in the whole Kingdom, then they have committed two Frauds inſtead of one. (1.) In the Quantities: And, (2.) In offering to ſtate the Debtor ſide of the Account upon the Port of London, with a gueſs at one Third more of the out-Ports, AGAINST all that they ſay was Imported in the whole Kingdom.

If they had deſign'd a fair and juſt Account, they ought to have ſtated the Exports and Imports exactly for the Port of London, and have made the addition of one Third for the out-Ports equal to both Sides; [redacted] have ſtated both Sides upon the Imports and Exports of the whole Kingdom: For if the Exports exceed the Imports for the Port of London only, as appears by the Cuſtom-Houſe Books: It would have been much more ſo for the out-Ports, becauſe many of our out-Ports, which lye in or near thoſe Countries, where the Woollen Manufactures are made, Fiſh cured, &c. Export much greater Quantities to France, than they could conſume the value of in French Goods, as Exeter, Colcheſter, Yarmouth, and many other Ports.

It is the unhappineſs of the favourers of the SCHEME, that even the very things they produce to juſtify it, ſerve farther to expoſe it, as appears by the following Caſe, which can be but juſt touched at here.

There appears a Paper, ſaid to be Sign'd long ſince by the Farmers of the Cuſtoms, containing an Account of French Goods Imported for two Years, (viz.) from Michaelmas 1667. to Michaelmas 1669. and the SCHEME takes the moiety of thoſe two Years for its foundation.

But if we pleaſe to recollect, That the Year 1667. was a Year ſo Circumſtanced, as few Years ever were before or ſince, (viz.) the Fire of London the September before; the Plague the Year before that; and the War with France ended the ſame Year. It can be no wonder, that the Demand for that Year ſhould exceed all the Years, that have come after it; and this will be explain'd by a Paper produced by the very ſame Hands, where take the Year and Quarter from Midſummer 1668. to Michaelmas 1669. which is five Quarters of their two Years, the Quantity of Wine Imported is but 9019 Ton, whereas the Three other Quarters before, makes, by their own Account, 12452 Ton; and yet the ſaid Five Quarters take in the Seaſon of two Vintages, and the other but of one.

A more particular Account of theſe things ſhall be given in the next *MERCATOR*.

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